

June 16, 2006

ANC1B  
Government of the District of Columbia  
PO Box 73710  
Washington, DC 20056

Z.C. # 06-24

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D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING

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**RE: Level 2 PUD Application**

Dear Commissioners:

The BCSA would like to apprise you of two recent meetings between BSCA representatives and Level2 representatives regarding the proposal to develop the Nehemiah site (Lot 219 in Square 2661). David Franco of Level2 attended both meetings. We were pleased to have Jeffrey Blum of Level2 and Robert Sponseller the architect of the project at our second meeting. On different occasions ANC Commissioners Nate Mathews and Thomas Smith were in attendance.

BSCA would like to state that Level2 and especially Mr. Franco were most accommodating in meeting with us. They attempted to provide us with all the information requested and were open and forthright in their responses to our questions. While we differ on some issues, we are excited at the prospect of working with them given some modification to the current proposal.

The central issues of the meetings were: justification of PUD v. By Right Development of the site, FAR, Height-Mass-Density, and parking among others. The public benefit package proposed was not discussed in detail due to the fact that we felt it would be premature to discuss the package when the development concept was still being questioned on its merits.

#### **Discussed Issues**

When asked why PUD v. By Right Development, Mr. Franco stated that the project is proposed as a PUD to allow for profit to offset the high acquisition cost due to current tenants buyouts. Mr. Franco went on to say his venture partners, Centrum Properties, would not settle for less than a 6.0 FAR. A "By Right" project allows for a 65 feet height and 3.5 FAR. The proposed PUD project calls for 95 feet height and a 6.0 FAR. The project proposes 225 residential units total with 15 unit designated low income and 158 parking spaces. BSCA doesn't believe this is enough parking considering the parking problems already affecting the area. Mr. Franco seemed willing however to discuss the matter further although he stated that his traffic study and the City's study supported his proposed number of parking spaces.

**ZONING COMMISSION  
District of Columbia**

**CASE NO. 06-24**  
**EXHIBIT NO. 13**  
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One of the last questions put to Mr. Franco concerned the impact his development will have in changing the character and site lines and views of the area, as well as the area becoming less family oriented and more single household friendly. Mr. Franco justified the development by referring to Office of Planning and its plan to increase the area's density.

### **Comments and Conclusion**

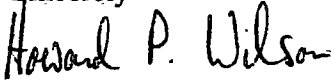
BSCA is pleased to see the Nehemiah site developed. As the site stands today it is clearly under developed. The BSCA may support redevelopment of the site with higher than by right bulk/height on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street sides if the Belmont Street and Chapin Street sides are substantially decreased in height and massing from the current design. The Site is a C2-B zone that we believe gives the developer the flexibility for mixed use and density needed. The developer's concept goes unnecessarily beyond the limits for the sake of profit. We do not believe the residents of this community should be saddled with the consequences of the developer's cost for the acquisition of the site. Regarding the impact this proposed development will have on the area, BSCA believes Mr. Franco misinterprets the Office of Planning's intent for the area. Our concerns with the project are as follows:

- The BSCA does not believe that the current design is appropriate for the site and neighborhood. We also believe that the public benefits package does not serve to mitigate the negative effects caused by the height, density and massing of the building and by the placement of the vehicular and service access favoring Belmont Street.
- The BSCA believes that the currently proposed +/- 2000 sf green roof both aesthetically and in terms of runoff reduction, is far below the thresholds set by other developers in by-right projects and therefore should not be considered as contributing any 'public benefit'.
- The BSCA believes that the parking provided for the project is insufficient and given the developer's request to increase the FAR by 2.5, this FAR and dwelling unit increase creates a detrimental effect on parking availability in the surrounding neighborhood that is not offset or mitigated by the parking currently proposed.
- The BSCA believes that the design requires further work and review and requests that the developer:
  - a. Justify to the community why it is not capable of building a financially successful project with less than 6.0 FAR
  - b. That the internal, double-loaded corridor design of the residential portion of the building be re-evaluated and not be allowed to dictate the exterior envelope and therefore the bulk, height and density of the building.
  - c. That the green roof be increased in size to a minimum of 55% of the building footprint so that it actually produces a measurable benefit to the City in the form of reduced storm water runoff.
  - d. Direct their architectural firm to re-design the building with a fundamental emphasis on reducing the total FAR, the height on Belmont and Chapin Streets and the 'looming' effect that the west elevation will create over the adjacent buildings to the west of the site.
- It is the opinion of the BSCA that as of this date, the scope, height, density and size of

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this project have not been properly brought before and reviewed by the community. The BSCA hereby requests that the developer review, re-evaluate and revise the design incorporating the criteria noted above, and the BSCA also hereby requests that ANC1B require that the current proposal be re-presented to the ANC, prior to any further action being taken by the ANC so that details of the proposal can be properly brought before the community.

Sincerely



Howard P. Wilson  
President, BSCA

CC: Council Member Jim Graham  
Level 2 Development, LLC  
Meridian Hill Neighborhood Association  
Sharon Schellin  
Carol J. Mitten  
Jennifer Steingasser